

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-23 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12-14 are amended, claim 2 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and claims 15-23 are added. Support for the amendments is found in dependent claims, the specification and the drawings. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representatives by Examiners Cheung and Laneau in the December 17, 2007 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §101. Claim 13 is amended to obviate the rejection. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 5, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 5, 13 and 14 are amended to obviate the rejection. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 6, 9 and 10 are amended to increase clarity and to correct informalities.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,558,258 to Rupert et al. (Rupert) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,503,144 to Rimoto et al. (Rimoto). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, drawing out sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space area for any character in any of the character groups they found the calculated arrival time, and that the space area is an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space.

As discussed during the interview, according to the Voronoi diagram of Rupert as shown in Fig. 5(a), for example, each area of a divided succor field is always a dominant area of either team. In the idea of Voronoi diagram, it is difficult to determine a "space area,"

because the Voronoi diagram is a special kind of decomposition of a metric space determined by distances to a specified discrete set of points in the space. In particular, in a Euclidean plane, the boundary of an area is a part of the bisector between these points. Thus, with the Voronoi diagram, a dominant area of each player may be determined but not the "space area," which is not a dominant area, as recited in claim 1.

Rimoto discloses determining whether a catch is possible by determining a movable range from the replaying time of the catching motion data of a fielder. Column 2, lines 25-27 and 33-39 of Rimoto, for example, recites using the future movement range of each player to determine the movable range. This is, however, merely a movable range. In other words, Rimoto merely discloses whether a catch is possible in an area, and not necessarily an area associated with a dominant area of the character group of that player.

As agreed to during the personal interview, neither Rupert nor Rimoto discloses or suggests drawing out sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space area for any character in any of the character groups they found the calculated arrival time, and that the space area is an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space, as recited in claim 1. At least for the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Rupert and Rimoto.

Independent claim 3 recites, *inter alia*, recognizing, as a space area, an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space. As discussed above and as agreed to during the interview, neither Rupert nor Rimoto teaches or suggests this feature. As such, claim 3 is patentable over the applied references.

Dependent claims 4-11, 13 and 14 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for the additional features they recite. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Rupert and Rimoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,149,520 to Takatsuka. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Takatsuka does not teach or suggest drawing out sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space area for any character in any of the character group based on the calculated arrival time, and that the space area is the area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space, as recited in claim 1. Therefore, Takatsuka does not overcome the deficiencies of Rupert and Rimoto with respect to claim 1. As such, claim 12 is patentable over the applied references. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

New independent claim 21 recites features similar to those recited in claim 3. In particular, claim 21 recites a space area recognition section for recognizing, as a space area, an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space, based at recognized area pertaining the power. As discussed above in relation to claim 3, none of the applied references teaches or suggests this feature. As such, claim 21 is patentable over the applied references.

New dependent claims 15-20, 22 and 23 recite features recited in the other dependent claims, which are supported in the specification. These claims are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 3-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time
Amendment Transmittal

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